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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**General U.S. Grant's Effective Use of the Leadership Triad in the Vicksburg Campaign**

**By**

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**Major, USAF**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_**

**22 April 2008**

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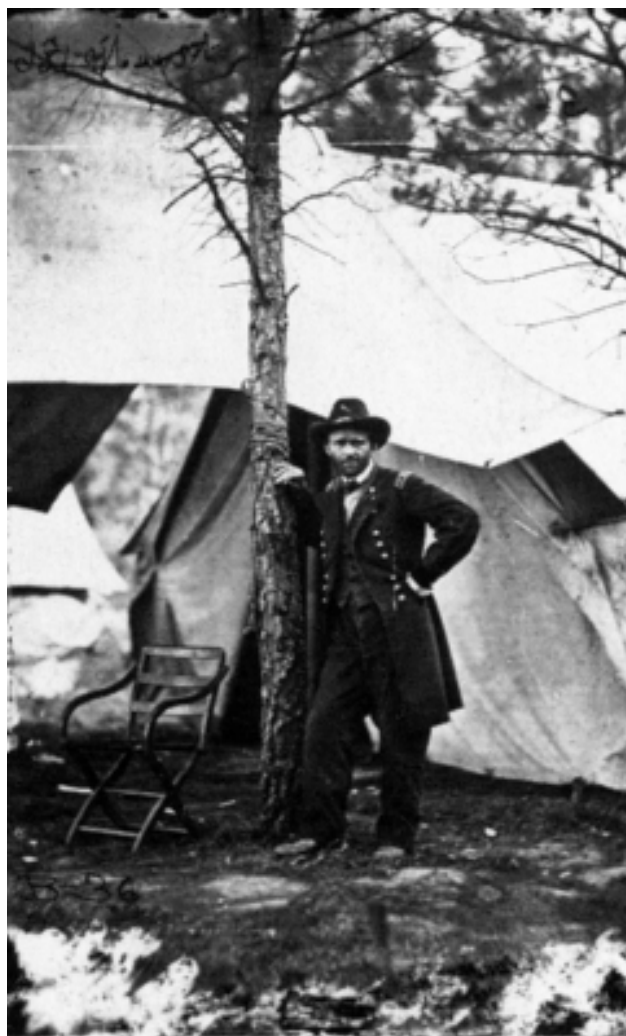
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## Preface

There is one West Pointer, I think in Missouri, little known, and whom I hope the northern people will not find out. I mean Sam Grant. I knew him well at the Academy and in Mexico. I should fear him more than any of their officers I have yet heard of. He is not a man of genius, but he is clear-headed, quick and daring.

Richard S. Ewell, general in Lee's army, spoke these prophetic words to General Lee in May of 1861.<sup>1</sup>



[Figure 1]

*Source: Photo from Joseph Glatthaar, Partners in Command (New York City: Free Press, 1994), 134.*

## **Abstract**

### *General U.S. Grant's Effective Use of the Leadership Triad in the Vicksburg Campaign*

General Ulysses S. Grant's victory at Vicksburg was a major turning-point in the Union's war against the Confederacy. It is clear that Grant's successful operational leadership was the main reason the Union forces were victorious at Vicksburg. Therefore, an examination of General Grant's operations and leadership during the Vicksburg campaign, focusing on three key tenets — the "Leadership Triad," which I developed — will identify key lessons learned for today's operational leaders.

The Leadership Triad is composed of the following three core leadership tenets: Ingenuity, Teamwork, and Decisive Decision Making. These components will be defined in detail, showing how they apply to today's operational leaders. General Grant's use of these timeless concepts will also be clearly demonstrated during an illustrative historical case study of the Vicksburg Campaign. After analyzing the impact of these elements of operational leadership on Grant's operations, the conclusion will be that General Grant's effective use of the Leadership Triad's tenets was the decisive factor in his success at Vicksburg. Finally, this paper clearly demonstrates that after examining the Vicksburg historical case, and its corresponding lessons learned, today's operational leaders must have the ability to think creatively, work as a team, and make decisive decisions. Today's leaders can ensure success if they follow the Leadership Triad.

## **Introduction**

General Ulysses S. Grant's victory at Vicksburg was a major turning-point in the Union's war against the Confederacy. By winning at Vicksburg, General Grant was able to give control of the Mississippi River back to the Union. It is clear that Grant's successful operational leadership was the main reason the Union forces were victorious at Vicksburg. Therefore, an examination of General Grant's operations and leadership during the Vicksburg campaign, focusing on three key tenets — the "Leadership Triad," which I developed — will identify key lessons learned for today's operational leaders.

The Leadership Triad is composed of the following three core leadership tenets: Ingenuity, Teamwork, and Decisive Decision Making. These components will be defined in detail, showing how they apply to today's operational leaders. General Grant's use of these timeless concepts will also be clearly demonstrated during an illustrative historical case study of the Vicksburg Campaign. After analyzing the impact of these elements of operational leadership on Grant's operations, the conclusion will be that General Grant's effective use of the Leadership Triad's tenets was the decisive factor in his success at Vicksburg.

### **Leadership Triad -- Ingenuity**

The first tenet of the Leadership Triad is "Ingenuity." The dictionary defines ingenuity as, "skill or cleverness in devising or combining."<sup>2</sup> This factor is absolutely critical to the success of an operational leader. Today's leader must have the ability to think beyond what is the "standard" approach and develop new techniques or innovative ways to solve problems. General Grant demonstrated extensive use of "ingenuity" during the Vicksburg Campaign.

Due to the challenging geography surrounding the city of Vicksburg, General Grant knew that he would have to deviate from traditional schemes of attack in order to defeat General Pemberton's Confederate forces (see figure 4). Finding a successful approach to employing his forces to take Vicksburg was not easy. In addition to the Confederate force garrisoned in, and around, Vicksburg, General Grant had to contend with Vicksburg's massive guns trained on the Mississippi River. General Grant initially attempted to attack from the north and east, but his supply lines were cut by raiding Confederates (see figure 5). He then tried numerous other methods either to circumvent Vicksburg or to attack from a different direction. Some of his efforts, such as attempting to cut a channel through the Cypress Swamp to change the course of the Mississippi River, bypassing Vicksburg completely, were quite imaginative. He also attempted to make routes through Lake Providence to the west of the Mississippi, as well as through the Yazoo River Delta to the north of Vicksburg (see figure 6). In the end, all of these efforts to take Vicksburg were unsuccessful.

In response to this demanding problem, General Grant demonstrated a truly outstanding example of creative thinking. He realized that if he could land his forces south of Vicksburg, he would have the ability to march them toward the city and attack from favorable ground to the east of it (see figure 7). This maneuver was not without risk. General Grant was informed that "the gunboat fleet might be destroyed or crippled and even if it survived...[Grant] would be virtually cut off from [his] base."<sup>3</sup> By thinking outside the standard operating procedures, however, General Grant was able to develop a unique plan that eventually ensured his victory at Vicksburg. At the completion of the maneuver General Grant had:

...wrought in a seventeen day campaign during which his army marched 180 miles, fought and won five engagements against separate enemy forces which if combined would have been almost as large as his own, inflicted 7,200 casualties at the cost of 4,300, and cooped up an apparently demoralized enemy in the Vicksburg defenses.<sup>4</sup>

General Sherman, upon arriving at Vicksburg from the east, also noted that, “until this moment, I never thought your expedition a success...this is a campaign. This is success if we never take this town.”<sup>5</sup> A reporter from the New York Times added that, “a more **audacious plan** than that devised by [Grant] has **scarcely ever been conceived**.”<sup>6</sup>

This inventive scheme of maneuver was instrumental to the success of the Union at Vicksburg. General Grant realized that a frontal assault against elevated, fortified positions could be futile as it was for the Union at Fredericksburg. General Sherman, who suggested that “the road back to Memphis should be secured and reopened,” proposed a course of action involving a retreat back to Memphis, Tennessee, to enable the Union to attack from the north and then to swing west into Vicksburg.<sup>7</sup> General Grant, commenting on Sherman’s proposal, said:

...the country is already disheartened over the lack of success on the part of our armies....If we went back so far as Memphis it would discourage the people so much that the bases of supplies would be of no use: neither men to hold them nor supplies to put in them would be furnished. The problem for us was to move forward to a decisive victory, or our cause was lost.<sup>8</sup>

General Grant’s unique scheme to move south, into Confederate territory, and then attack had important strategic implications for the war effort. It showed that the Union was attacking and winning. In the early part of 1863, that was incredibly important. At the operational level, the scheme of maneuver allowed the Union forces a chance to attack Vicksburg and the Confederate forces from favorable ground. There was no way the Union was going to win via a direct assault from the Mississippi River, and the strategic

environment did not allow for a pull-back. This inventive maneuver was the only way the Union was going to be able to attack Vicksburg successfully.

The scheme of maneuver to capture Vicksburg was not the only example of General Grant's inventive thinking. After successfully landing at Bruinsburg, General Grant took a completely unorthodox step, cutting his own supply line, for his move north towards the Confederates at Vicksburg and Jackson. General Grant's trusted friend, General Sherman, following textbook procedures, had cautioned General Grant to "stop all troops till your army is partially supplied with wagons."<sup>9</sup> General Grant had learned some very valuable lessons, however, when his supply lines had been cut by the Confederates during his first attempt to capture Vicksburg. In his memoirs, General Grant stated, "I was amazed at the quantity of supplies the country afforded. It showed that we could have subsisted off the country for two months..."<sup>10</sup> With that experience in hand, General Grant was able to quickly move his forces toward the Confederates and was unhindered with protecting his supply line.

The unconventional decision to cut his own supply line was a key component of the Union's victory at Vicksburg. Additionally, his decision enabled him to maximize his combat power. During previous campaigns, General Grant found that, "for every combat soldier [he] had available, there were two committed to guarding the railroads upon which his army depended for resupply."<sup>11</sup> This decision also ensured that Union troops did not have a vulnerable supply trail. In fact, the Confederates, in an attempt to halt General Grant's attack on Jackson, Mississippi, attempted to find his supply line and stop him as they did on his first attempt to take Vicksburg (see figure 7). There was no supply line to attack, however, and General Grant was free to attack at the time and place of his choosing. The decision to sever his own line of communication was instrumental to General Grant's success at Vicksburg.

A third example of General Grant's ability to think in an inventive manner was the use of slaves in his army. When Union troops would move into an area, slaves would come into their camps. This caused "clogging [of] the roads and the lanes and overflowing [of] the Army camps."<sup>12</sup> While most people in the Confederacy viewed slaves as property, General Grant thought of them as possible force multipliers. This, however, was not an easily accepted venture. No one wanted to help set-up training or assistance camps because "almost to a man, the soldiers of this army hated to do anything which seemed to resemble serving [slaves]."<sup>13</sup> In the end, General Grant ignored the culture of racism and, using untraditional thinking, employed these former slaves as an advantage for the Union. He realized what value they could bring and employed them, for example, to "work for the engineers on the building of roads and bridges and fortifications."<sup>14</sup>

The use of former slaves was also an important facet of Union's crucial victory. General Grant realized that if a former slave could, "show his worth as an independent laborer, he could later be given a musket and could be used as a soldier."<sup>15</sup> This decision also had strategic consequences as well, because if former slaves became successful soldiers, Grant reasoned that, "[slaves] could even become a citizen and have the right to vote."<sup>16</sup> This decision adversely affected the Confederates in three major ways. First, it took away the labor force of the Confederacy that allowed the plantations to still produce despite the owners being at war. Second, it added fighting forces to the Union. Third, and finally, the decision to treat slaves as equals set the conditions for their eventual rights. This directly attacked a critical vulnerability of the Confederacy – slavery.

## **Leadership Triad -- Teamwork**

The second tenet of my Leadership Triad is “teamwork.” The dictionary defines teamwork as, “cooperative work done by a team (especially when it is effective).”<sup>17</sup> To be successful, today’s operational leaders must be able to cooperate with, and to develop, an effective team. This goes beyond assisting another portion of one’s service; it means working with other forces/capabilities and integrating them as a cohesive team. This cooperation could be with a different service, but could also apply to other agencies in the elements of our national power. In General Grant’s time period, a prime example of great teamwork was his relationship with the Admiral Porter – the commander of the Union’s naval forces supporting Vicksburg (see figure 2).

General Grant’s inventive scheme of maneuver could not have been accomplished without working with the local naval commander. In 1863, there was no formal, joint doctrine in existence to facilitate the relationship between ground and naval forces. General Grant knew, however, that if he was going to succeed in his campaign against Vicksburg, he could only do so with the help of the Union Navy. The navy also realized they could not do it alone. They had already tried once to tackle Vicksburg by themselves and learned that “while the naval bombardment might level the town...the ship’s guns could not alone overcome [the] determined defense.”<sup>18</sup> General Grant and the navy established a close relationship. In fact, Admiral Porter stated, “I am ready to cooperate with anybody and everybody...all I ask is [for] confidence and a pull together.”<sup>19</sup>

The first example of strong teamwork between General Grant’s forces and Admiral Porter was Grant’s use of boats as key logistics support for his scheme of maneuver. In the difficult and swamp/bayou-filled terrain west of the Mississippi River, General Grant used

support boats to transport his troops from Milken's Bend to Bruinsburg. Although this was no easy task, due to Grant's leadership, the teamwork between the Union Navy and Army never faltered. The pinnacle of the cooperation between the two services, enabling the operational functions of movement/maneuver and logistics, came when the naval boats successfully ferried General Grant's forces across the Mississippi River at Bruinsburg.

The teamwork between the army and navy was not limited to those operational functions. The Union Navy's gunboats also played a major role in the successful campaign against Vicksburg. Despite operational challenges, anytime General Grant needed firepower from the water the navy was there. In the Yazoo River Delta maneuver, for example, the Union gunboats were put in a very challenging environment, described as having "...overhanging trees [that] knocked down smokestacks and stumps [that] punctured hulls"<sup>20</sup> (see figure 8). In fact, conditions in the area of operations became so dire that the gunboats got stuck, forcing General Sherman to rescue them from the Confederates. Admiral Porter wrote in a letter to General Sherman, "Hurry up, for heaven's sake. I never knew how helpless an ironclad could be steaming around through the woods without an army to back her."<sup>21</sup> While this maneuver was not executed exactly as planned, it showed how much of a team the army and navy truly had become.

The teamwork with the Navy was critical to the Union's success. In his letter to Admiral Porter, General Grant noted that he wanted to use the naval boats for "transportation of troops and artillery. With these appliances I intend to be able to move 20,000 men at one time"<sup>22</sup> (see figure 9). This movement allowed Grant to quickly move massive amounts of troops and supplies during the river crossing. Upon successfully crossing the Mississippi, General Grant is recorded as saying,

I felt a degree scarcely ever equaled since...I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures from the month of December previous to this time that have been made and endured, were for the accomplishment of this one object.<sup>23</sup>

Grant's situation is analogous to the United States Air Force tanker community's motto that, "No One Kicks Ass--Without Tanker Gas."<sup>24</sup> General Grant needed those supplies, troops and equipment on the other side of the Mississippi and his teamwork with the dedicated Union Navy ensured his success.

The navy also played a very successful role in running the imposing Confederate gauntlet of fire from Vicksburg and bringing much needed firepower to Grant, who was waiting to cross into Bruinsburg. The crossing was successful for many reasons, and chief among them was the ability of the navy to provide fire-support during that very vulnerable crossing and landing. Grant summed up the gunboat's importance by saying, "without the aid of the gunboats it will hardly be worthwhile to send the troops...."<sup>25</sup> Still later in the Vicksburg Campaign, Admiral Porter was, once again, able to provide critical support to General Grant when he closed the west side of Vicksburg during the Union siege of Vicksburg (see figure 10). In the end, the teamwork between Admiral Porter and General Grant ensured that Union was successful at Vicksburg.

### **Leadership Triad – Decisive Decision Making**

The third tenet of my Leadership Triad is "decisive decision making." Decisive decision making means that a leader has the ability to look at numerous inputs and factors, but still remain calm and make the right decision. It is the proverbial "calm-under-pressure," coupled with the ability to make clear decisions. Arguably, this factor is the most important of the three since a rattled leader, overwhelmed with information, may be incapable of

employing ingenuity or teambuilding in their plan. General Grant's leadership offers numerous examples of decisive decision making.

Multiple historical accounts of the Vicksburg Campaign comment on Grant's ability to make clear decisions in the heat of battle. A great example comes from General Sherman, who wrote to General Grant that he was impressed with Grant's ability to give his, "best preparations and [then] enter battle without hesitation...no doubts, no reserve. Such quiet conviction instilled confidence..."<sup>26</sup> A Secretary of War observer also stated that General Grant had "...a temper that nothing could disturb and a judgment that was judicial in its comprehensiveness and wisdom."<sup>27</sup>

Even during the execution of his inventive scheme of maneuver to attack Vicksburg, he did not become fixated on his planned landing at Bruinsburg. Obviously, a great number of operational details needed to be worked out to successfully complete his mission. Similarly, the tempo at Grant's headquarters was hectic, and one observer described it as "officers waiting, clerks scribbling rapidly, orderlies racing on horseback..."<sup>28</sup> Instead of becoming bogged down, however, General Grant realized that if he did not set up some sort of deception plan, the Confederates could just push their forces out to meet him wherever he attempted to cross the Mississippi. He realized that a key component to success was to keep the Confederates off-balance.

To that end, General Grant ordered General Sherman to make a frontal assault on the Chickasaw Bluffs in order to make the Confederates think the Union would accomplish the traditional scheme of maneuver. General Grant also ordered Colonel Benjamin Grierson to make a raid along the entire east-side of the Mississippi to further confuse the Confederates

(see figure 6). Despite having an enormous amount of pressure on him, General Grant was able to decisively decide on an important component of his scheme of maneuver.

General Grant's ability to decisively decide on a deception plan to support his creative scheme of a maneuver was important to the success of the operation. Colonel Grierson's raid, in particular, had an enormous effect on the Confederates. It was reported that that, "all [of] Mississippi was in a panic. Stations were being destroyed, bridges torn down and railroad tracks ripped up."<sup>29</sup> General Grant hoped that, "through disrupting communications the wedge could be enlarged between Confederate forces in Tennessee and Mississippi."<sup>30</sup> This action also served to confuse the Confederates as to the approach of the Union. General Sherman's planned deception was also important. Explaining his orders to Sherman, General Grant said, "the effect of a heavy demonstration in that direction would be good so far as the enemy are concerned."<sup>31</sup> The end result of all this deceptive action was perfectly described by a Confederate general when he said, "the enemy are in front of me in force such as never been seen at Vicksburg."<sup>32</sup> As a result, Grant's crossing at Bruinsburg was unopposed. General Grant kept his cool during the intense operations, and his decision to use deception was a critical reason behind the victory at Vicksburg.

When he was approaching Vicksburg from the south after the successful Bruinsburg crossing, General Grant again demonstrated his ability to be cool under pressure, and make decisive decisions. In this example, General Grant had just cut his own supply line and was under intense pressure to quickly attack Vicksburg. Civil War scholars point out that, "the most logical move would seem to drive straight northward towards Vicksburg, keeping his left flank in contact with the river."<sup>33</sup> Grant was able to think clearly, and "out of the box," despite the demands, realizing that his best action was to attack the Confederates at Jackson,

Mississippi, first. This action added additional days until he would be able to bring forces against Vicksburg, but eventually proved to be the correct decision.

The decision to attack General J.E. Johnston at Jackson was also a decisive factor in the Vicksburg Campaign (see figure 7). General Johnston could have caused major problems for General Grant from Jackson. If he was not careful, General Grant, “might suddenly find another enemy on [his] right flank.”<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, General Grant attacked General Johnston at Jackson in an attempt to “eliminate the Johnston threat before it became serious and before Pemberton realized what was happening, and then turn back west to attack Vicksburg.”<sup>35</sup> This decision ensured that the approximately 6,000 troops under Johnston’s command would not be able to interfere in General Grant’s operations against Vicksburg.<sup>36</sup> This is important because if those forces would have been able to join with General Pemberton, the forces in Vicksburg would have been approximately 38,000 as compared to General Grant’s 41,000.<sup>37</sup> As it turned out, General Grant’s decision enabled him to divide the Confederates forces and ensured he would have a marked troop strength advantage during his attack on Vicksburg.

Another example of General Grant’s decisive decision making occurred during the Battle of Champion’s Hill (see figure 11). This battle was the bloodiest of the entire Vicksburg Campaign, with 6,200 killed or wounded from both the Union and the Confederacy.<sup>38</sup> The situation leading up to the battle was critical because General Grant had been attempting to capture Vicksburg for seven months, had been without a formal supply line for over 17 days, and then ran into a Confederate force, in a defensive position, that was almost equal to his. Instead of becoming overwhelmed with the challenges, General Grant called for an attack. He realized that the defeat of these forces would be a serious blow to the Confederates’ ability to defend Vicksburg. Once again, General Grant’s ability to be cool

under pressure and his decisive decision making, enabled his forces to gain a commanding advantage in the Vicksburg Campaign.

### **Counter-Arguments – A Leadership Triad wasn't necessary for Union victory**

Some arguments can be made that General Grant's use of the Leadership Triad was not the decisive factor in the Union victory at Vicksburg. Some Civil War scholars argue instead that the Union achieved victory because they enjoyed "manpower superiority of more than three to one."<sup>39</sup> In essence, these scholars maintain that there was no way the Confederacy could have won. The Union Commander did not require any sort of acumen because the war and this battle were a pre-decided conclusion. The fallacy of this argument is that the number of forces in the operational area was generally the same. General Grant's decisive decision to attack General Johnston first, dividing the Confederate armies, prevented Confederate forces from being numerically the same. General Grant's decisions, not overall manpower, were the reason why the Union forces enjoyed a numerical advantage.

Another argument that scholars propose concerns the Union's "economic resources and logistical capacity advantage...."<sup>40</sup> They argue that because Grant had this massive logistical capacity, Vicksburg was sure to eventually fall. The error in this argument is that the Confederates did not need a massive logistical capacity in the Vicksburg Campaign. Their strategy was to defend, and they enjoyed interior lines of communications. General Grant's imaginative scheme of maneuver was the only way for the Union to defeat the Confederates at Vicksburg, and he realized that he needed logistical capacity to make it happen. It could be argued that Grant's decisive decision to use his logistical capacity, as well as teamwork with the Union Navy, to his advantage is just another positive example of his ingenuity.

General Grant's acceptance of risk is another counter-argument against his ingenuity. A newspaper correspondent at that time noted that "a single mistake or disaster might have overwhelmed his army."<sup>41</sup> Grant could have been repulsed by the Confederates as he attempted to cross the Mississippi River at Bruinsburg, or he could have met disaster if stopped or delayed while maneuvering around Jackson and Vicksburg without his supply line. Grant, on the other hand, realized that his maneuver scheme had some risk associated with it, which is why he took steps to "confuse [General Pemberton] from beginning to end; [and] with inferior numbers, Grant had driven him into Vicksburg...."<sup>42</sup> The bottom line is that General Grant's decisive decisions and inventive plan enabled him to mitigate the associated risks. In fact, General Grant used his forces so well that General J.E. Johnston noted that, "Grant's Western troops were twice as good as the Easterners he fought in Virginia."<sup>43</sup> Abraham Lincoln also heaped praise upon General Grant's imaginative scheme, decisive decisions and teamwork. The President described the campaign as, "one of the most brilliant in the world...Grant is my man." Thanks to Grant's actions, the President added, "the Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea...the Confederacy was cut in twain."<sup>44</sup>

### **Lesson Learned #1 – Innovative Logistics**

General Grant's use of the tenets of the Leadership Triad was the major reason why the Union won at Vicksburg. The value of the Leadership Triad is not limited to Civil War-era fighting either; it is timeless in nature and must be used by operational commanders today. For example, General Grant's unorthodox decision to cut his own supply line after his landing at Bruinsburg was made so that he could be more maneuverable and maximize his available fighting capability. The generic lesson learned is that operational commanders need to evaluate their operating area to leverage opportunities unique to their situation. In

the case of Vicksburg, General Grant learned that he could live off the resource-rich land. Today's commanders could benefit from applying innovative thinking while they are deployed.

Although innovative thinking should not be restricted to logistics, for ease of demonstration, the logistics example can be easily extended to today's efforts. Original ideas on logistics may help accomplish the objective of your operation. If an operational commander is tasked with a peacekeeping, or perhaps even a theater security cooperation operation, it would be beneficial to establish a commerce relationship with the local populace. Such a relationship would allow the United States to infuse cash into the local economy, which could potentially help improve the conditions and increase stability within the theater of operation. It could also improve the security of the operational commander's soldiers, sailors, airmen, or marines because a community economically linked with American forces would find it in their best interest to ensure troop safety. For instance, if the operational commander is buying supplies from a local business and the business is happy with the relationship, the business owner will want to ensure the commerce continues. It is not too far of a stretch to think the business owner may then decide to inform the commander if he sees the enemy plant an improvised explosive device, or other hazard, near the store, because he wants the Americans to stay alive to continue patronizing his business. As a secondary benefit, the operational commander saves the United States government the shipping costs and transportation requirements of supplies that were purchased locally. The simple act of turning a potential critical vulnerability, such as logistics, into a critical strength by utilizing innovation could pay huge dividends for the operational commander.

## **Lesson Learned #2 – Innovative Teamwork**

During the Vicksburg Campaign, General Grant's use of freed slaves was both brilliant and innovative. Despite some initial difficulties with cohesion, Grant eventually motivated all his soldiers (black and white) to come together in the name of freedom against the rebel forces. This action also provides a generic lesson learned to today's operational commander. As discussed above, innovative thinking and the importance of teamwork was crucial to General Grant's success at Vicksburg. Operational commanders should consider innovative ways of adding local capabilities to their forces.

This concept is not limited to Mississippi in 1863, it is a lesson learned that operational commanders should incorporate in all operations. By incorporating local forces, commanders can accomplish many objectives. The first objective is that the operational commander can unify the local populace against the enemy. This could have side benefits of making the residents feel safer, which is normally one of the major objectives of American forces. There are additional benefits as well; by incorporating local forces, operational commanders can add to the legitimacy of their operation. The United States would not be seen as an invader, but rather as a conduit for the local forces to improve the security and stability of the region. Including local forces also adds to the knowledge base of the operational commander. In today's world, the local commanders must be able to have a quick understanding of the local customs, traditions, and workings of the local area. Too often, American approach the situation as if we know everything, when instead, we should ask the local experts for help and information. Finally, an additional benefit, similar to the logistical example above, is that teaming up with the local forces may permit the operational commander to discover that his intelligence information flow increases. This could

dramatically improve the security to forces as well as increase the likelihood of operational success. Clearly, there are many sound reasons to think about inventive ways to building teamwork during an operation.

### **Lesson Learned #3 – Team and Joint Operations**

The final lesson learned from General Grant's operations in Vicksburg is the importance of teamwork and joint operations. Without the support of the Union Navy, General Grant would never have been able to take Vicksburg. For today's operational commander, understanding and employing joint operations are critical to success. As our joint doctrine states, "the armed forces of the United States are most effective when employed as a joint force."<sup>45</sup>

In the Vicksburg historical example, river operations were the primary capability that was employed by the Union Navy. In today's environment, riverine operations may become a primary naval supporting action. In May 2005, the U.S. Navy established Riverine Group One and a Riverine Squadron under Navy Expeditionary Combat Command.<sup>46</sup> The purpose of which was "to begin a transformation from blue water to brown water Sailors."<sup>47</sup> This is obviously a major change in focus for the U.S. Navy but this has implications for the other services as well. The U.S. Army, as General Grant found in Vicksburg, will have to be able to interact intimately with this new naval force because of their joint operating area. This same holds true for the U.S. Marines and Air Force. U.S. Navy riverine forces may come into direct contact with the enemy and could require Air Force close air support. It is imperative that this recently reactivated and critical naval capability become fully embedded in the joint environment. The United States is the most powerful nation in the world when it

comes to the fight as a robust team. Naval riverine operations are an example of a capability that needs to be part of the joint team.

### **Conclusion**

General Ulysses S. Grant's use of the Leadership Triad was the main reason for his victory at Vicksburg. General Grant repeatedly used innovative ideas regarding supply, local forces, and his scheme of attack to propel him to victory at Vicksburg. Similarly, Grant's ability to work as a team with the Union Navy was instrumental in his victory. Decisive decisions that Grant made such as employing a deception plan, and his decision to attack General Johnston first, were also shown to be major factors in the Union's success at Vicksburg.

The Leadership Triad has great applicability to today's leaders. Furthermore, the Vicksburg Campaign offers generic lessons learned, which are applicable to today's operational commanders. For instance, the importance of innovative logistics solutions was highlighted, as was the use of local forces to increase teamwork and the ability to reach objectives. Another key lesson learned was the importance of Joint Operations and, in particular, how riverine operations may become a major factor in today's operating environment. After examining the Vicksburg historical case, and its corresponding lessons learned, it is abundantly clear that today's operational leaders must have the ability to think creatively, work as a team, and make decisive decisions. Today's leaders can ensure success if they follow this Leadership Triad.

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Albert D. Richardson, *A Personal History of U.S. Grant* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1868), 194.
- <sup>2</sup> <http://mw4.m-w.com/dictionary/ingenuity> (accessed 6 April 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Chicago: Ballantine Books, 1989), 627.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.
- <sup>6</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Edison: Castle Books, 1960), 455 [my emphasis added].
- <sup>7</sup> Earl Schenck Miers, *Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 140.
- <sup>8</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 627.
- <sup>9</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 436.
- <sup>10</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant (Two Volumes), Volume I.* (New York: The Century Company, 1917), 362.
- <sup>11</sup> John D. Waghelein, *The Mexican War and the Civil War: The American Army's Experience in irregular warfare as a sub-set of a major conventional conflict* (Frank Cass and Company, 1996), 153.
- <sup>12</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 356.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.
- <sup>17</sup> <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=teamwork> (accessed 7 April 2008).
- <sup>18</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 421.
- <sup>19</sup> Joseph Glatthaar, *Partners in Command* (New York City: Free Press, 1994), 167.
- <sup>20</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 383.
- <sup>21</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 587.
- <sup>22</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 412.
- <sup>23</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *A Great Civil War: A Military and Political History, 1861-1865.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 265.

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- <sup>24</sup> John O. Howard, *Air Force Capabilities Briefing* (given 3 April 2008).
- <sup>25</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 411.
- <sup>26</sup> Joseph Glatthaar, *Partners in Command*, 144.
- <sup>27</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 389.
- <sup>28</sup> Joseph Glatthaar, *Partners in Command*, 167.
- <sup>29</sup> Earl Schenck Miers, *Web of Victory*, 148.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.
- <sup>31</sup> Joseph Glatthaar, *Partners in Command*, 150.
- <sup>32</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 628
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 629.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 629.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 629.
- <sup>36</sup> Thomas E. Griess, *Atlas for the American Civil War (West Point Military History Series)*. (New York: Avery, 1986), 20
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.
- <sup>38</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 630.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 855.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 855.
- <sup>41</sup> Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South*, 479.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.
- <sup>44</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 638.
- <sup>45</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0, (Washington DC: CJCS, 17 September 2006), I-1.
- <sup>46</sup> [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=29926](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=29926) (accessed 10 April 2008)
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid*



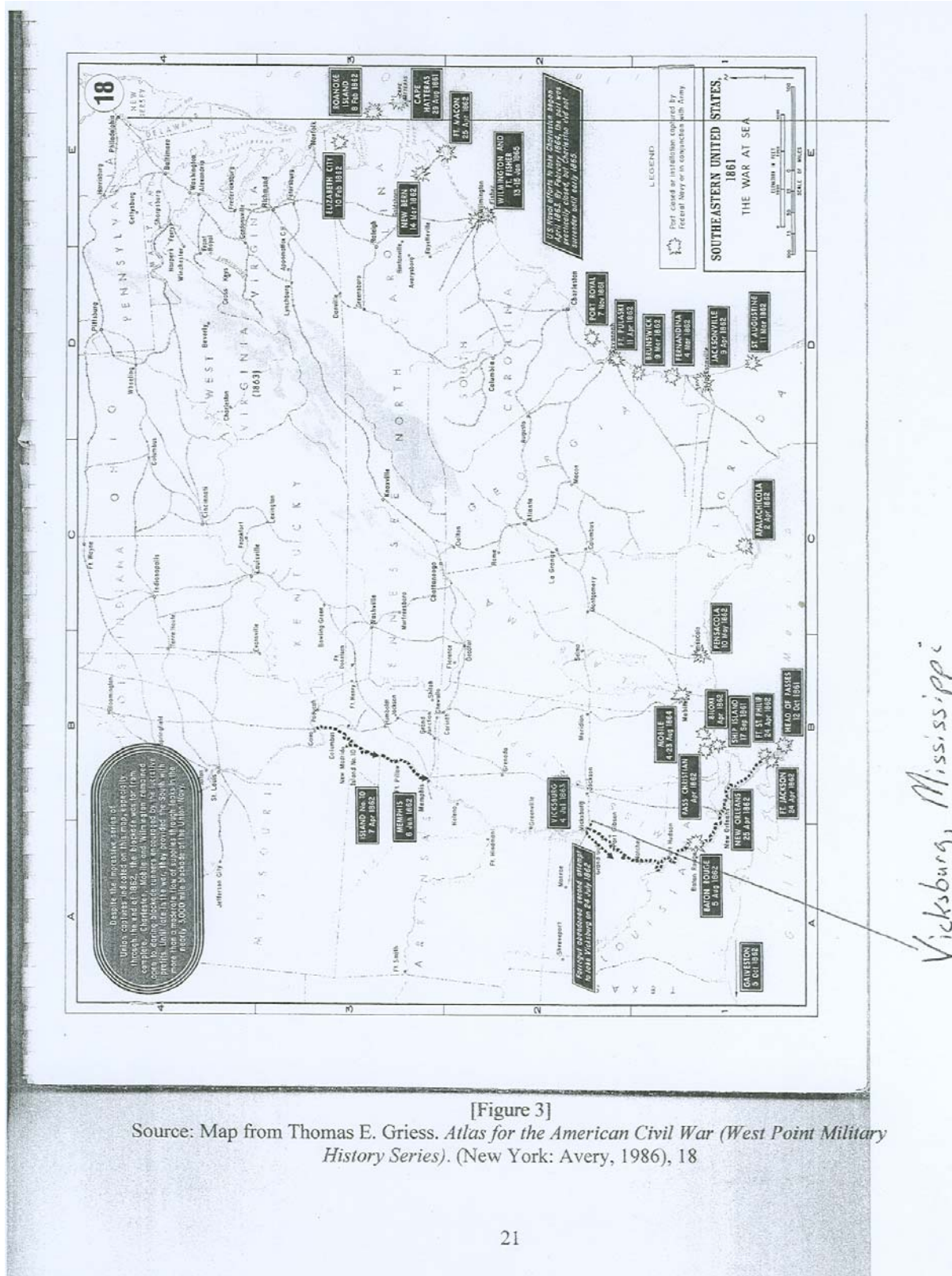
Leader of the Mississippi Fleet,  
Admiral David Dixon Porter,  
1866. [ABOVE LEFT] *Photograph by  
Mathew B. Brady.*

Major General William Tecum-  
seh Sherman, c. 1865. [ABOVE  
RIGHT]

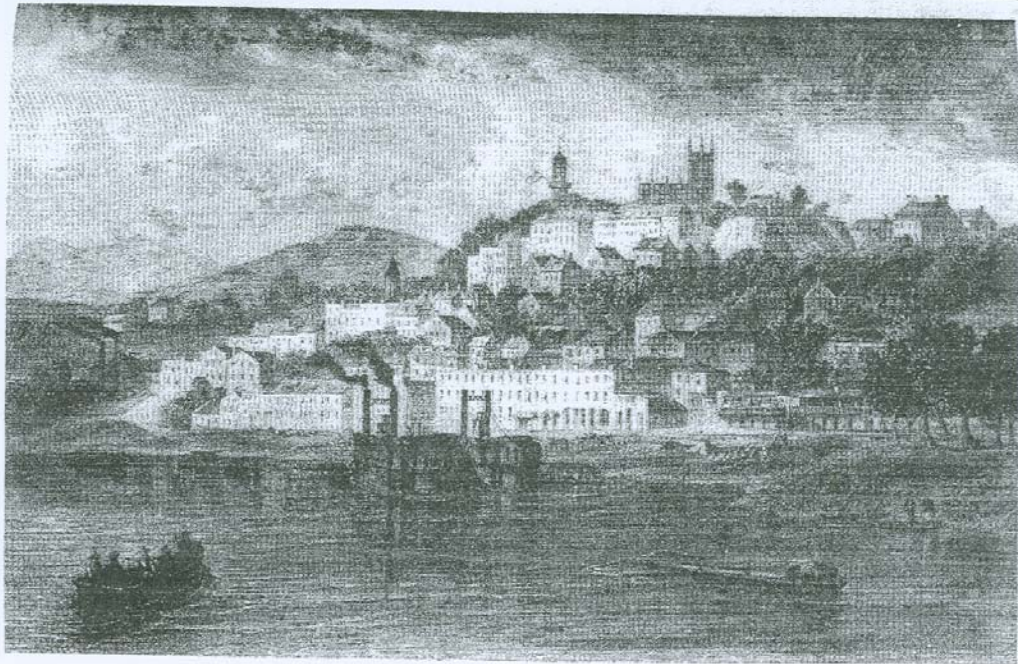
Major General J. C. Pemberton,  
CSA. [LEFT]

[Figure 2]

Source: Photo from Earl Schenck Miers, *Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 142.



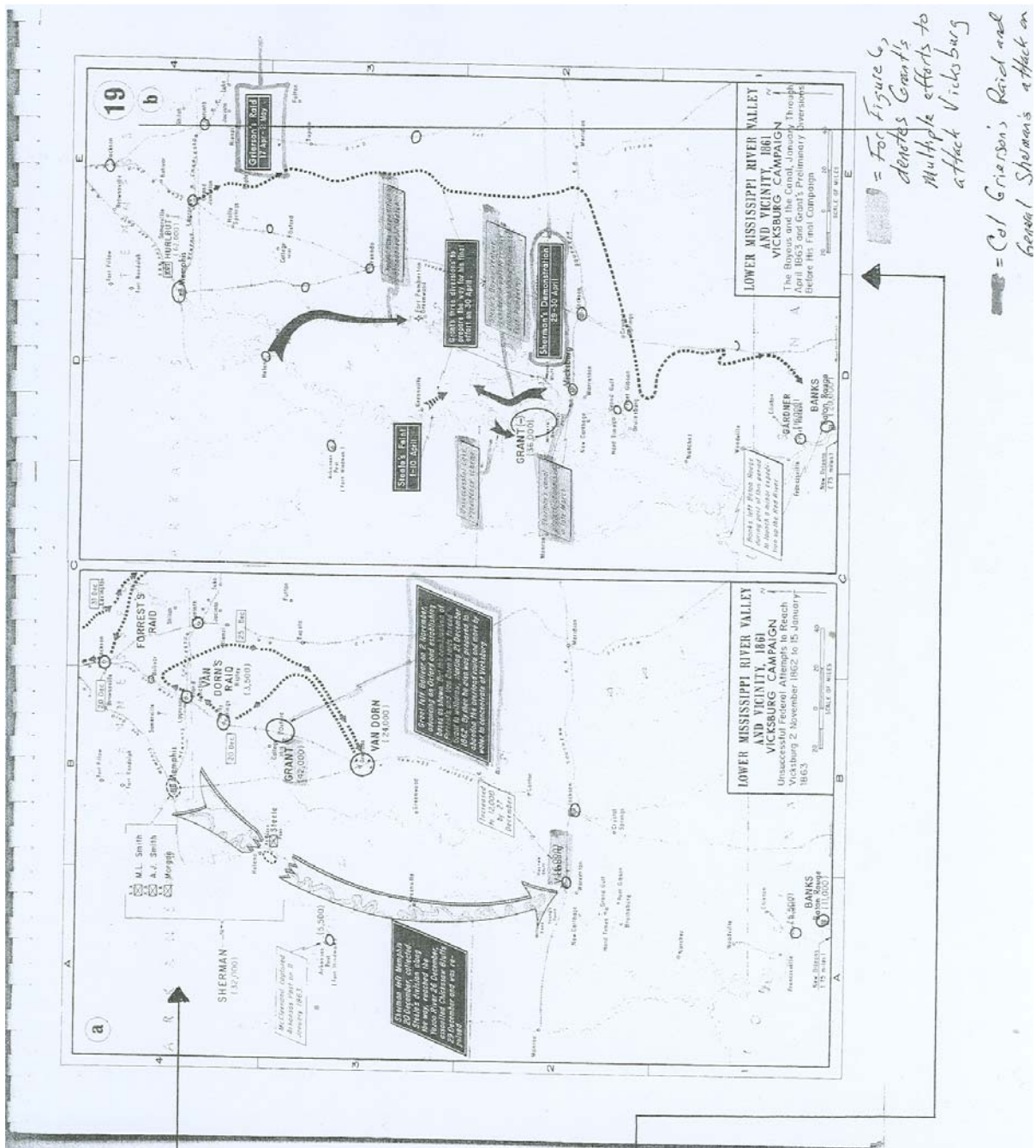
[Figure 3]  
Source: Map from Thomas E. Griess. *Atlas for the American Civil War (West Point Military History Series)*. (New York: Avery, 1986), 18



Vicksburg, the terraced city on the Mississippi. Engraving by Ed. Willmann, published by Ch. Chardon, Paris.

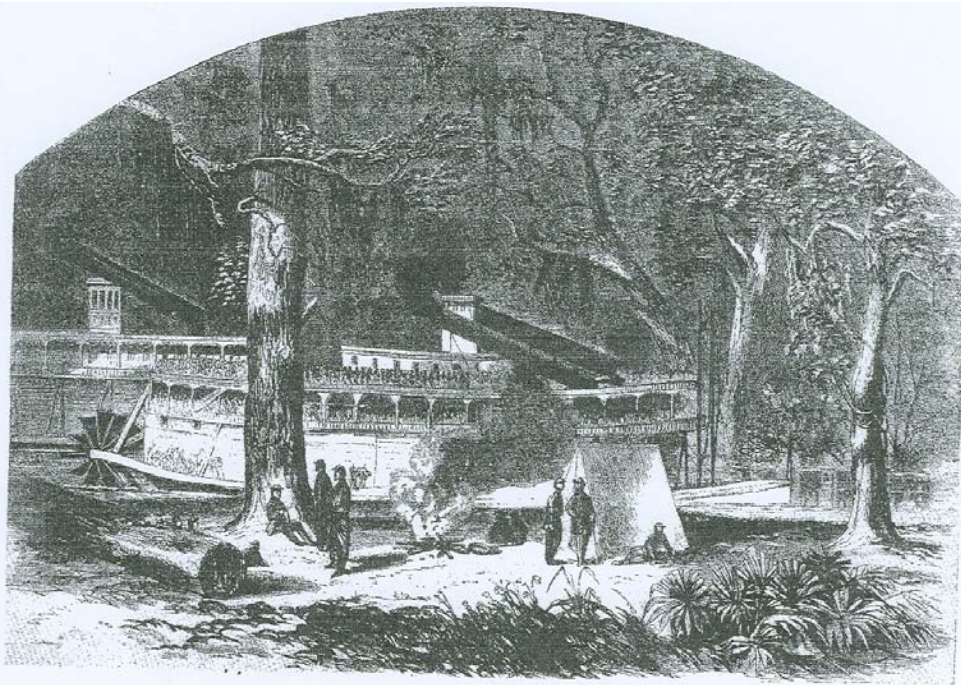
[Figure 4]

Source: Photo from Earl Schenck Miers, *Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 142.



[Figure 5] [Figure 6]  
 Source: Maps from Thomas E. Griess. *Atlas for the American Civil War* (West Point Military History Series). (New York: Avery, 1986), 19

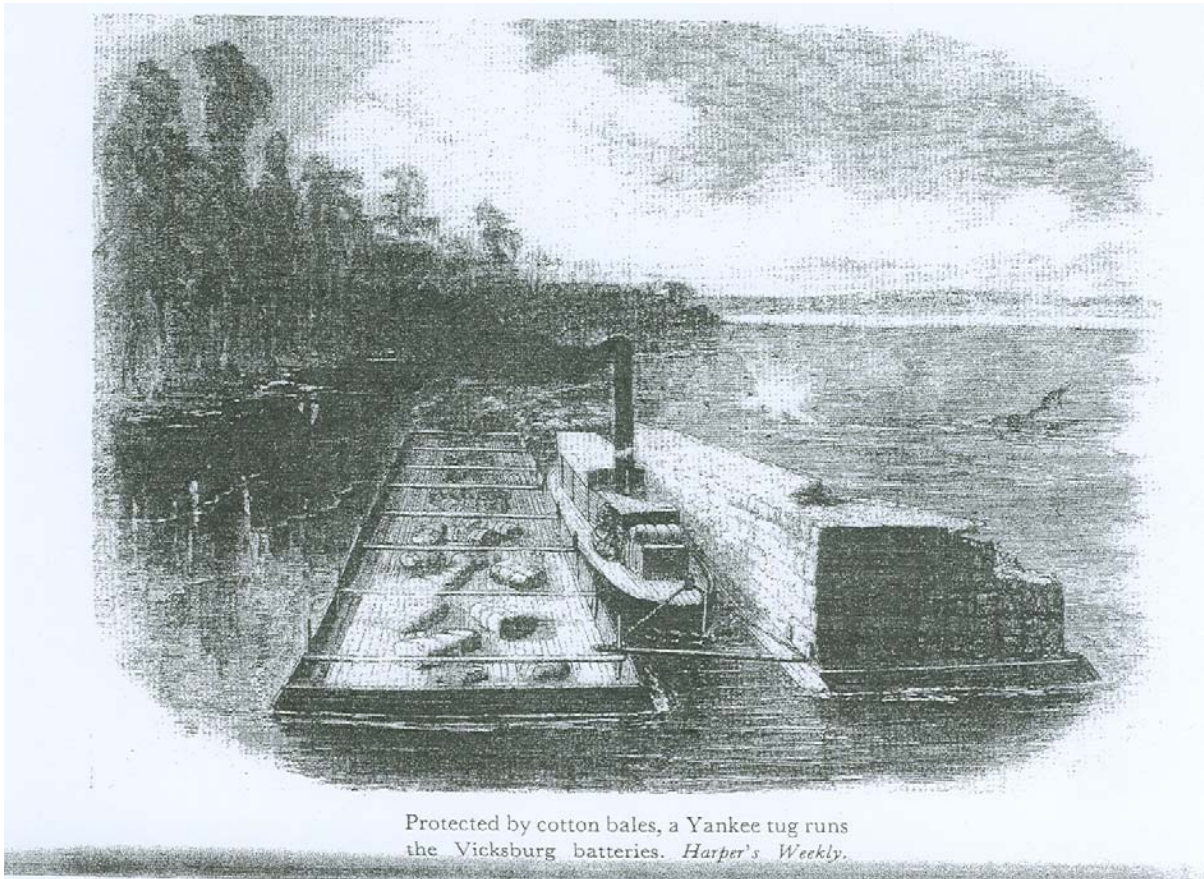




Union transports in the Dixie Bayous, showing, as Sherman said, "their bonnets knocked off." Sketch by Theodore R. Davis for Harper's Weekly, 1863.

[Figure 8]

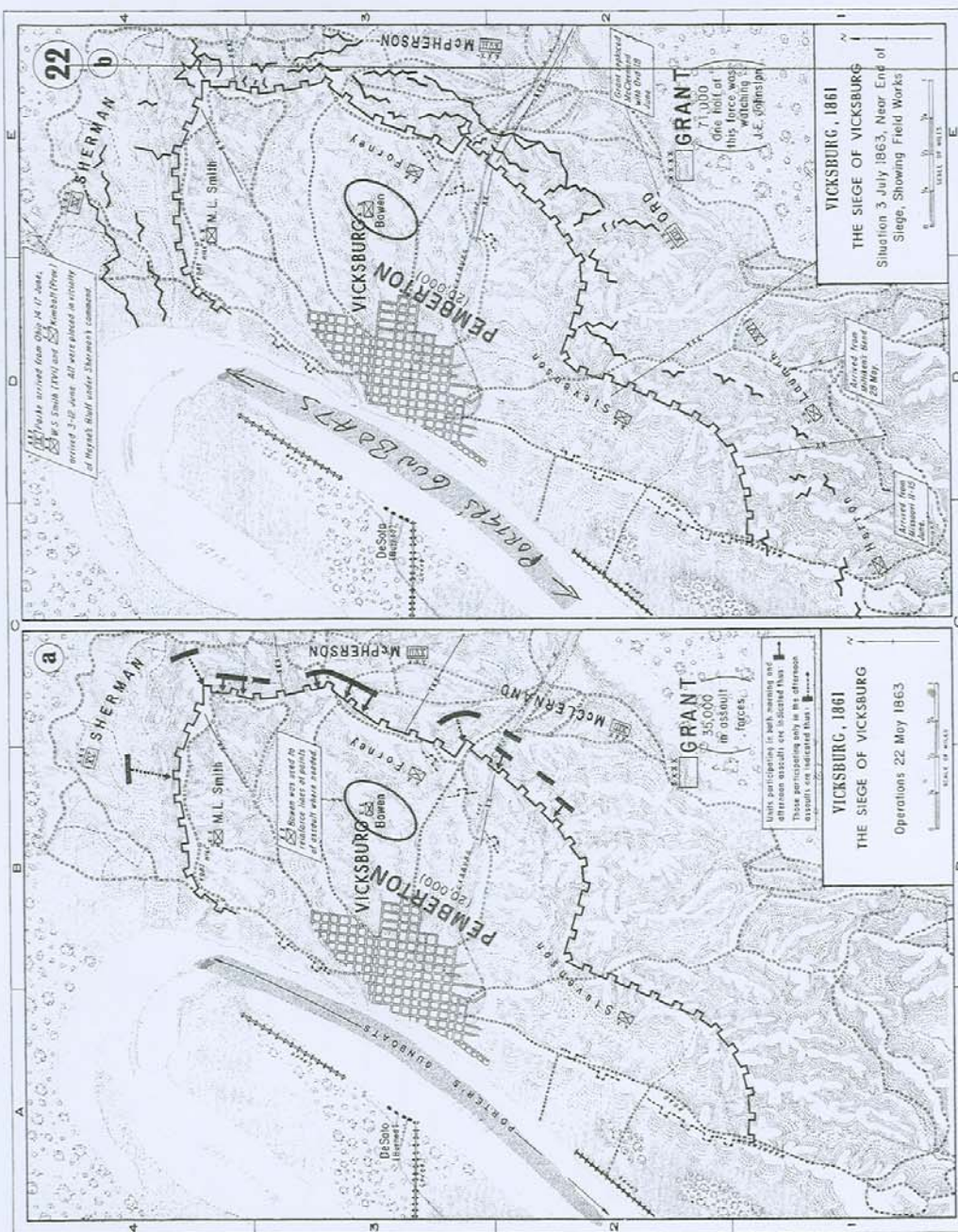
Source: Photo from Earl Schenck Miers, *Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 142.



Protected by cotton bales, a Yankee tug runs the Vicksburg batteries. *Harper's Weekly*.

[Figure 9]

Source: Photo from Earl Schenck Miers. *Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 142.



[Figure 10]

Source: Maps from Thomas E. Griess. *Atlas for the American Civil War (West Point Military History Series)*. (New York: Avery, 1986), 22



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